



MAY 15, 1956



1026 17th STREET, N. W., WASHINGTON 6, D. C.

NATIONAL PROGRAM—1956-1958

(As adopted by the national Convention, Chicago, Illinois, April 30-May 4, 1956)

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan organization, is dedicated to the principles of self-government established in the Constitution of the United States. The League works through its Voters Service and its Program to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government.

Voters Service is a year-round activity to help the individual citizen to be politically effective. It develops understanding of the essentials of individual liberty and representative government; it provides nonpartisan factual information on candidates and issues; it increases citizen participation in political processes in the interest of responsible and responsive government.

CURRENT AGENDA

Governmental issues chosen by the Convention for concerted action.

INDIVIDUAL LIBERTIES: Evaluation of the federal loyalty-security programs, with recognition of the need for safeguarding national security and protecting individual liberties.

CONSERVATION: Study of water resources.

CONTINUING RESPONSIBILITIES

Positions on national issues to which the League has given sustained attention and on which it may continue to act.

1. U. S. support of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, including adequate financial contributions, increased use, and improved procedures.
2. U. S. support of measures designed to keep the peace through the United Nations and regional defense arrangements.
3. U. S. support of measures to promote international economic development and technical assistance.
4. Opposition to constitutional changes that would limit the existing powers of the Executive and the Congress over foreign relations.
5. Support of U. S. trade policies that will help solve national and international economic problems.
6. Measures to improve the budgetary procedures of the Congress.
7. Opposition to constitutional limitation on tax rates.
8. Measures to counteract inflation or deflation.
9. Self-government for the District of Columbia; extension of national suffrage to the citizens of the District.

PRINCIPLES

Governmental measures and policies, supported by the League as a whole, which constitute the authorization for adoption of national, state, territorial, and local Current Agendas.

1. The principles of representative government and individual liberty established in the Constitution of the United States.
2. A system of government which is responsible to the will of the people and which enables the voter to carry out his obligations as a citizen.
3. A system of government in which responsibility is clearly fixed.
4. A system of government which promotes coordination of the operations of federal, state, and local governments.
5. Governmental organization and administration which contribute to economy and efficiency.
6. A merit system for the selection, retention, and promotion of government personnel.
7. Legal protection of citizens in their right to vote.
8. A system of free public education which provides equal opportunity for all.
9. Protection of minority groups against discrimination.
10. Removal of legal and administrative discriminations against women.
11. A system of federal, state, and local taxation which is flexible and equitable.
12. Fiscal and monetary policies that promote a stable and expanding economy.
13. Responsibility of government to share in the solution of social and economic problems which affect the general welfare.
14. Adequate financing of government functions and services.
15. Conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest.
16. Domestic policies which facilitate the solution of international problems.
17. Cooperation with other nations in solving international problems and promoting world peace.
18. Development of international organization and international law to achieve permanent means of cooperation.

EXPLANATION OF CURRENT AGENDA—1956-1958

INDIVIDUAL LIBERTIES: Evaluation of the federal loyalty-security programs, with recognition of the need for safeguarding national security and protecting individual liberties.

The League will first attempt to develop a framework in which to evaluate the loyalty-security programs. A look will be taken at varying concepts of both national security and individual liberties, as well as at some of the League's own principles of government: representative government and individual liberty; clearly fixed lines of responsibility; governmental efficiency and economy; a merit system for selection, retention, and promotion of personnel; and domestic policies which facilitate the solution of international problems.

Scrutinizing the Programs

With this background, the League will examine and compare the evolution and current operation of the five federal loyalty-security programs: *Government Personnel*, which covers virtually all federal employees; *Atomic Energy*, which covers Atomic Energy Commission employees as well as employees of industries with atomic contracts; *Military Personnel*, which covers the uniformed personnel of the Army, Navy, and Air Force; *Port Security*, under the U. S. Coast Guard, which covers seamen and dockworkers; and *Industrial Security*, which covers employees of industries with defense contracts.

Emphasis will be placed on the relative effectiveness and fairness of the programs, as well as their direct and indirect impact at home and abroad.

Consideration also will be given to the role which each of the three branches of government has had in shaping these programs. This kind of scrutiny of security operations should offer opportunities for the League to learn more about the way in which the federal government operates.

The League also will examine differing reactions to the programs and some of the concrete proposals for their improvement to be made by government agencies such as the Commission on Government Security and by nongovernmental groups such as the New York City Bar Association.

Asking the Right Questions

At this point the League should be ready to consider how the programs measure up to security-liberty needs, as well as to the League's government principles. The earlier review of principles should have provided many different kinds of questions, covering possible loopholes in security protection, overlapping responsibilities, duplication in efforts, or inequities in treatment of individuals:

Are the programs well administered?

Are the programs producing a maximum amount of security with a minimum of cost?

Are the programs in line with American traditions of justice and fair play?

In evaluating the programs and the proposals for improvement, the League will move in the direction of possible agreement on a position. The Convention indicated a strong desire to take action as soon as consensus has developed within the League, perhaps by the time the Council meets in April 1957.

CONSERVATION: Study of water resources

The study of water resources will be directed toward finding answers to four broad questions:

1) What is the role of the federal government in the conservation and distribution of water supply?

2) Are present methods used by the federal government measuring up to League standards of good government, such as: clearly fixed responsibility; coordination of federal, state, and local governments; economy and efficiency in government; and management of natural resources in the public interest?

3) What are the essentials of a sound U. S. water policy?

4) What problems are likely to arise in carrying out a federal program locally and regionally, and how can they best be solved in the areas of planning, financing and management?

The national study, as planned, will include such problems as stream pollution, watershed and forest management, flood control, and soil conservation. Which federal agencies are concerned with these areas, and how they cooperate, will be the basis of the study.

Material Already Available

There is a great deal of reliable factual material in print which League members will find useful in the early stages of their work on conservation. Three Presidential Commissions have studied U. S. water resources and reported their findings and possible solutions, in 1950, 1952, and 1955. Water resource task forces of both the First and Second Hoover Commissions made exhaustive studies. The report of the Mid-Century Conference on Resources for the Future, published in 1953, contains pertinent material. The Department of Agriculture yearbooks for 1948, 1949, and 1955, entitled "Trees," "Grass," and "Water," respectively, contain useful references.

The state Leagues will have a key role in developing this new study. Their assignment will include identifying the federal agencies engaged in water resource work within the state and relating the federal programs to those of state and local agencies. These intergovernmental aspects of the League study were of paramount interest to League members in the selection of this subject for the Program, both in the program proposals and during debate at Convention.

Some states have already examined their own structure of government in this field, but to most it will be a new project. Any regional approach by the Leagues to the solution of water resource problems will be delayed until the broad national study has resulted in some general areas of agreement.

Reports from Council delegates next year will determine how near the Leagues are to arriving at consensus in some areas, and whether action can be included during the second year.

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